Exchange of wheat for oil with Iraq

*30. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of foodgrains sent to Iraq under the food for oil agreement agreed by the U.N.O.;

(b) the quantum of oil received by Indian under the above agreement; and

(c) what are the details of the future plans under this exchange agreement?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) No such exchange of foodgrains against oil has taken place.

(c) An understanding has been reached, in principle, about Counter Trade Arrangements which would enable Iraq to effect import of certain food items (especially wheat) against export to crude oil and oil products.

Indians charged for drug trafficking in Saudi Arabia

*31. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of Indians of a particular State are being charged recently for drug trafficking in Saudi Arabia;

(b) whether it is also a fact that these Indians do not get any legal or other assistance from the Indian Government Missions in Riyadh and Jeddah; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) According to available information, over the last two years, 30 Indians have been arrested on charges of illegal trafficking in narcotics.

(b) and (c) In Saudi Arabia, Judicial proceedings and punishments to criminals are determined by the Shariat. Accordingly no lawyers are permitted in court. However, as soon as the Indian Mission receives information about an Indian national arrested for drug trafficking, they make formal requests for consular access. They also submit mercy petitions on behalf of the individuals concerned, if so desired by the accused, with the local Government.

Production of fruits in Andhra Pradesh

*32. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh is the largest fruits producing State in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the annual production of fruits, category-wise; and

(c) the action proposed to assist the State in export to earn foreign exchange especially on mango export?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. As per the latest figure available for production of fruits (for the year 1998-99), the position of Andhra Pradesh is fourth in the country after Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

(c) The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is providing assistance for setting up cold storage and cargo handling facilities for perishables at the International Airport at Hyderabad. Besides, training programmes are being organised for the growers and exporters for pre-harvest, harvesting and post-harvest management of fruits including mangoes. The exporters are also extended financial assistance to set up modern packhouses for post harvest handling and export packaging of mangoes.